

Panel 21: Calls to Witnessing

Moderator: Cynthia Huff

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Write Her Name: Re-Calling the Disappeared, Erased, and Unknown

The path of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2016 reveals that we collectively still participate in the forces of erasure and amnesia that have muted and continue to mute the presence of women as historical actors. This process of erasure is being fought by the

#SayHerName movement. The dynamics of the double jeopardy faced by black women is illuminated by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Professor of Law at UCLA and Columbia, when she gives public lectures.

She asks everyone to stand up until they hear an unfamiliar name. She then reads the names of unarmed black men and boys whose deaths ignited the Black Lives Matter movement; names such as Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin. Her audience are informed and interested in civil rights so “virtually no one will sit down”, Crenshaw says approvingly. “Then I say the names of Natasha McKenna, Tanisha Anderson, Michelle Cusseaux, Aura Rosser, Maya Hall. By the time I get to the third name, almost everyone has sat down. By the fifth, the only people standing are those working on our campaign.”

(<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/may/30/sayhername-why-kimberle-crenshaw-is-fighting-for-forgotten-women>)

My paper will describe my efforts to uncover/recover/recall the lives of African American women in my two current projects: a television series about African Americans in 18th- and 19th-century New England and a public history network, “Reclaiming Our Ancestors,” in which descendants of 18th- and 19th-century African American antislavery writers and activists are working to reclaim their family histories and bring them to the present. The obstacles we face researching and rewriting the stories of men like Dred Scott and Solomon Northup are formidable, but the obstacles---the gaps, silences, erasures in the archives---that we face in trying to discover the stories of women like Harriet Scott and Anne Hampton Northup are sometimes insurmountable. I will discuss the problems of archival research and potential ways to surmount them, a task that is crucial to anyone concerned about writing women’s lives back into history.

Escreva o nome dela: recordando o desaparecido, apagado e desconhecido

O caminho do movimento Black Lives Matter [Vidas Negras Importam] em 2016 revela

que nós coletivamente ainda participamos nas forças de apagamento e amnésia que têm silenciado e continuam a silenciar a presença das mulheres como atores históricos. Esse processo de apagamento está sendo combatido pelo movimento #SayHerName [#DigaoNomeDela]. A dinâmica do perigo duplo encarado pelas mulheres negras é iluminada por Kimberlé Crenshaw, professora de Direito da UCLA e Columbia, quando ela dá palestras públicas.

Ela pede que todos se levantem até que escutem um nome não familiar. Então ela lê os nomes dos homens e garotos negros, desarmados, cujas mortes deram ignição ao movimento Black Lives Matter; nomes como Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin. Sua audiência é bem informada e interessada nos direitos civis, logo “virtualmente ninguém sentará”, Crenshaw afirma aprovando. “Então eu falo os nomes de Natasha McKenna, Tanisha Anderson, Michelle Cusseaux, Aura Rosser, Maya Hall. Quando eu chego no terceiro nome, quase todos estão sentados. No quinto, os únicos de pé são aqueles que trabalham na nossa campanha.”

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Meu artigo irá descrever meus esforços para revelar/recuperar/recordar as vidas das mulheres afrodescendentes nos meus dois atuais projetos: uma série de televisão sobre afrodescendentes nos séculos XVIII e XIX na Nova Inglaterra e uma rede de história pública, “Reclaiming Our Ancestors” [Recuperando Nossos Ancestrais], na qual descendentes de escritores antiescravistas e de ativistas afrodescendentes dos séculos XVIII e XIX trabalham para recuperar suas histórias familiares e trazê-las para o presente. Os obstáculos que encontramos ao pesquisar e reescrever histórias de homens como Dred Scott e Solomon Northup são formidáveis, mas os obstáculos — os vazios, silêncios, aniquilamentos nos arquivos — que encontramos tentando descobrir as histórias de mulheres como Harriet Scott e Anne Hampton Northup são, por vezes, intransponíveis. Eu discutirei os problemas de pesquisas arquivísticas e potenciais maneiras de superá-los, uma tarefa crucial para qualquer um interessado em escrever as vidas das mulheres de volta na história.

[Traduzido por Juliana Geizy Marques de Souza - julianamrqs0@gmail.com]

Professor of American Studies at the University at Buffalo, Kari J. Winter has been researching slavery, resistance, and American culture for thirty years. She is the author of *Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change: Women and Power in Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives, 1790- 1865* (1992, 1995, 2010) and *The American Dreams of John B. Prentis, Slave-Trader* (2011).

Her 2005 edition of Jeffrey Brace’s memoir of slavery, *The Blind African Slave: or, Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch, Nick-named Jeffrey Brace*, was the book’s first appearance since 1810.